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	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W		
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 002197

SIPDIS

PARIS PLEASE PASS TO A/S SUSAN E. RICE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF PDAS POWELL, AF DAS SCHNEIDMAN,  
AF/S DIRECTOR RENDER, AF/S DESK OFFICER GURNEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/20/10

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SUBJECT: MUGABE MEETS PROTAGONISTS IN ATTEMPT TO  
CONTROL FARM CRISIS

REF: HARARE 02164

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD FOR REASONS 1.5  
(B), (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. PRESIDENT MUGABE RECENTLY HAS MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU) AND THE WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION THAT IS SPEARHEADING THE OCCUPATIONS OF FARMS, BOTH SEPARATELY AND TOGETHER. AS OF APRIL 20 IN HARARE, THE GENERAL SENSE IS THAT THE MEETINGS HAVE SOMEWHAT LESSENERED THE TENSIONS IN AT LEAST SOME RURAL AREAS. AMBASSADOR MCDONALD ALSO HAS HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH CFU REPRESENTATIVES, AN INDEPENDENT MEDIATOR WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE RECENT STATEHOUSE MEETINGS, AND THE NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER, WHO PROVIDED US A LIMITED READOUT ON THE VISIT HERE OF THE NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. WE SEE A WILLINGNESS TO TALK AND EVEN SOME OPENNESS TO COMPROMISE, BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE FARM OCCUPATIONS ARE A MEANS FOR MUGABE TO EXERCISE POLITICAL POWER, NOT AN END IN THEMSELVES. WE ARE SKEPTICAL THAT THE FARM INVASIONS WILL CEASE BEFORE ELECTIONS ARE HELD. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) IN A SERIES OF WELL-PUBLICIZED MEETINGS, PRESIDENT MUGABE HAS MET SERIALY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS WHO HAVE SEEN MANY OF THEIR MEMBERS' PROPERTIES OVERRUN BY SQUATTERS, LEADERS OF THE WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION WHO HAVE LED THE INCURSIONS, AND THE

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TWO GROUPS TOGETHER. AFTER THEIR JOINT MEETING LAST NIGHT, I.T APPEARS THAT THE PROTAGONISTS WILL CONTINUE TO TALK AND MAY WORK TOWARD A SOLUTION, EVEN THOUGH THE OCCUPIERS WILL REMAIN ON THE FARMS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IT APPEARS FOR THE MOMENT THAT THE MEETINGS MAY HAVE ABATED THE VIOLENCE THAT CLAIMED THE LIVES OF TWO FARMERS THIS WEEK.

MEETING THE FARMERS

3. (C) OUR SERIES OF MEETINGS BEGAN ON APRIL 19, WHEN TIM HENWOOD, LEADER OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION (CFU), AND THE CFU REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, WILLIAM HUGHES (PLEASE PROTECT BOTH), MET WITH THE AMBASSADOR AT THE EMBASSY. TDY POLOFF AND ECONOFF ALSO ATTENDED. THE DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND THE MEETING THE CFU REPRESENTATIVES HAD WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE ON APRIL 17 AND THE CONDITIONS FARMERS ACROSS THE NATION ARE FACING IN THE WAKE OF THE ONGOING FARM INVASIONS AND RECENT KILLINGS OF TWO FARMERS.

14. (C) HENWOOD SAID THE MEETING WITH MUGABE HAD BEEN FRANK, AND HE FELT SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. HE ALSO WAS REALISTIC ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF READING MUGABE'S INTENTIONS AFTER MEETING HIM, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT MERE WORDS FROM MUGABE NEED TO BE BACKER BY ACTIONS BEFORE AN INTERLOCUTOR CAN BE SURE MUGABE IS ON COURSE.

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15. (C) HENWOOD CONFIRMED TO US THAT MANY FARMERS HAVE LEFT THEIR FARMS, AND MORE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DOING SO. HE DID NOT GIVE NUMBERS, BUT IMPLIED THAT THE NUMBERS WERE SUBSTANTIAL, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS WHERE KILLINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE OR OTHER VIOLENCE HAS FLARED. HE ALSO SAID THAT THERE ARE AREAS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN NO INVASIONS AND THINGS ARE GENERALLY PEACEFUL. WHEN ASKED, HE SAID ABOUT 40 OR 50 FARMERS HAVE SIGNED DOCUMENTS AT THE DEMAND OF THE OCCUPIERS THAT SUPPOSEDLY TRANSFER THE OWNERSHIP OF THE FARMLAND TO THE OCCUPIERS.

16. (C) MUCH OF THE USEFUL INFORMATION HENWOOD CONVEYED WAS ABOUT THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE FARM INVASIONS.

IT APPEARED TO HIM THAT THE AREAS SUFFERING FROM INVASIONS WERE WHERE SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING ZIMBABWE'S WAR OF LIBERATION. OFTEN THE WAR VETERANS WERE RETURNING TO THEIR FORMER AREAS OF OPERATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 HARARE 002197

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF PDAS POWELL, AF DAS SCHNEIDMAN,  
AF/S DIRECTOR RENDER, AF/S DESK OFFICER GURNEY

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DEATH THREATS TO FARMERS WERE WIDESPREAD.

THESE WERE WHAT HAD LED TO MANY OF THE FARM  
EVACUATIONS.

THERE HAD BEEN SOME BURNING OF FARMHOUSES AND  
OUTBUILDINGS, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE FULL TOBACCO  
STORAGE SHED NEAR HARARE THAT HAD DESTROYED THAT  
FARMER'S HARVEST OF TOBACCO.

MOST OF THE OCCUPIED FARMS ARE BEING HELD BY  
ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE. A SMALL NUMBER OF  
FARMS HAVE LARGE NUMBERS OF OCCUPIERS.

THE OCCUPIERS ARE NOT GENERALLY ARMED.

MANY FARM WORKERS--WHO ARE BLACKS--HAVE BEEN  
BADLY BEATEN, A FACT NOT RECEIVING MUCH PRESS  
ATTENTION. HENWOOD SAID THE OCCUPIERS ON THE  
FARM OF THE FIRST WHITE FARMER TO BE KILLED HAVE  
SINCE RETURNED TO INTIMIDATE THE WORKERS THAT  
REMAIN, AND HAVE BEEN WAVING BODY PARTS FROM ONE  
OF THE FARM WORKERS THEY HAD EARLIER ABDUCTED.

17. (C) HENWOOD SAID THE KILLINGS OF THE TWO FARMERS APPEAR QUITE DIFFERENT. IN THE FLRST DEATH, IT APPEARS THAT TEMPERS FLARED AND THINGS GOT OUT OF CONTROL. IN CONTRAST, HE SAID THE SECOND KILLING LOOKED DELIBERATE AND WELL PLANNED. IN THAT CASE, THE FARM HAD NOT BEEN OCCUPIED PRIOR TO THE KILLING, THE ATTACKERS  
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ARRIVED EARLY IN THE MORNING IN A CONVOY AND IMMEDIATELY OPENED FIRE WITH THE MANY GUNS THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM. HE ALSO SAID THE ATTACKERS DID NOT SPEAK NDEBELE, THE NATIVE TONGUE IN THE REGION OF THE ATTACK.

18. (C) SOMEWHAT SURPRISINGLY, HENWOOD SAID THE COOPERATION FROM HIGHER LEVEL ARMY AND POLICE OFFICIALS HAD BEEN FAIRLY GOOD. WHILE ORDINARY POLICE ON THE SCENES OF THE ATTACKS HAD DONE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO PREVENT THEM--IN THE FIRST KILLING THE VICTIM WAS REMOVED FROM A POLICE STATION IN THE PRESENCE OF THE POLICE--SOME SPECIAL UNITS THAT HAD BEEN DISPATCHED AT HIS REQUEST BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAD COOPERATED. THEY HAD, HOWEVER, ARRIVED FAR TOO LATE TO BE OF ANY PRACTICAL USE.

19. (C) HENWOOD SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE CFU WAS DOING WHAT IT COULD TO PROTECT ITS MEMBERS, THEY HAD COME TO FEEL THEY WERE A BIT PERIPHERAL TO THE HEART OF THE PROCESS, WHICH WAS A POLITICAL QUESTION. IN SO MANY WORDS, HE SAID THE LAND ISSUE WAS A POLITICAL FOOTBALL FOR MUGABE AND THE WAR VETERANS. THUS, THE CFU AND ITS MEMBERS FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ISSUE THEY CAN ULTIMATELY DO LITTLE TO AFFECT.

110. (C) HENWOOD ALSO PASSED ON SOME INFORMATION THAT SOUNDED AS IF IT HAD PARTLY BEEN GLEANED FROM SOURCES OF UNKNOWN CREDIBILITY AND PARTLY  
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RESULTED FROM READINGS OF THE POLITICAL TEA LEAVES. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, HENWOOD SAID HE THOUGHT THE CABINET HAD BEEN SPLIT ABOUT 50-50 OVER THE LAND OCCUPATIONS WHEN THEY BEGAN, BUT THAT NOW MUGABE WAS NEARLY THE LAST REMAINING DEFENDER OF THEM. HE THOUGHT THIS EXPLAINED THE WIDE SPLIT BETWEEN VICE PRESIDENT MSIKA AND PRESIDENT MUGABE OVER ENFORCING THE LATEST COURT JUDGMENT ORDERING THE GOVERNMENT TO END THE OCCUPATIONS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS LIKELY THAT MUGABE APPROVED MSIKA'S STATEMENT AND THEN CONTRADICTED HIM.

MEETING THE MIDDLEMAN

111. (C) LATER ON APRIL 19, WE MET WITH FATHER FIDELIS, A CATHOLIC PRIEST WHO HAD ATTENDED THE APRIL 17 MUGABE-CFU MEETING IN THE SOMEWHAT HAZILY DEFINED ROLE OF MEDIATOR OR FACILITATOR. HE IS WELL KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY AND WE HAVE A POSITIVE VIEW OF HIM. FR. FIDELIS AGREED WITH HENWOOD THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN RELAXED AND FRANK. IT WAS APPARENTLY A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 HARARE 002197

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF PDAS POWELL, AF DAS SCHNEIDMAN,

AF/S DIRECTOR RENDER, AF/S DESK OFFICER GURNEY

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BOTH SIDES TO AT LEAST AIR THEIR VIEWS. AFTER  
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COMPARING THE READOUT FR. FIDELIS HAD OF THE CFU  
REACTION TO THE MEETING WITH THE REACTION THE CFU  
HAD GIVEN DIRECTLY TO US, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT  
SURE THE SIDES WERE LISTENING AS WELL AS TALKING.

12. (C) FR. FIDELIS THOUGHT THE EXPLANATION  
MUGABE HAD GIVEN TO THE FARMERS ABOUT THE ORIGINS  
OF THE LAND PROBLEM IN THE BRITISH COLONIAL  
PERIOD HAD PRODUCED REAL UNDERSTANDING ON THE  
FARMERS' PART OF MUGABE'S MOTIVATION. THE CFU  
CHARACTERIZED THIS PART OF THEIR TALKS WITH  
MUGABE AS A REPLAY OF A BROKEN RECORD. FR.  
FIDELIS ALSO CLAIMED THE CFU DELEGATION HAD TOLD  
MUGABE THEY NOW REALIZE THE "NO" VOTE ON THE  
RECENT CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM HAD BEEN A  
MISTAKE--SOMETHING WE FIND HARD TO BELIEVE.

13. (C) FR. FIDELIS WAS EVASIVE ON GIVING AN  
OPINION ON SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES, SUCH AS WHERE  
THE WAR VETERANS ARE GETTING THEIR VEHICLES AND  
WEAPONS, BUT HE DID HAVE INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS  
ON SOME OTHER ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAS BEEN  
DEALING WITH THE WAR VETS AND THE LAND TAKEOVER  
ISSUE FOR SEVERAL YEARS BUT SAID IT WAS POINTLESS  
TO TALK WITH THE VETERANS' LEADER, "HITLER"  
HUNZVI. HE CHARACTERIZED HUNZVI AS "NOT A  
SOLUTION MAN." HE ALSO SAID THAT WHILE THERE  
WERE SOME LOGICAL ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE VEXING  
ISSUES IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL TANGLE, THEY WERE  
OF LITTLE USE BECAUSE EMOTIONS HAVE COME TO THE  
FORE.

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THE NIGERIAN READOUT

14. (C) ON APRIL 20 THE AMBASSADOR HAD AN  
INITIAL MEETING WITH THE NEWLY ARRIVED NIGERIAN  
HIGH COMMISSIONER, B.W. JUTA, THAT FOCUSED MAINLY  
ON THE NIGERIAN VIEWS OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL  
SITUATION AND THE JUST-CONCLUDED VISIT OF  
NIGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER LAMIDO TO PRESIDENT  
MUGABE.

15. (C) COMMISSIONER JUTA SAID PRESIDENT  
OBASANJO HAD DECIDED TO SEND HIS FM AS SOON AS HE  
HEARD OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRST WHITE FARMER, AND  
THAT IT WAS THE VIOLENCE SURROUNDING THE LAND  
ISSUE THAT MOST CONCERNED OBASANJO. JUTA DID NOT  
PROVIDE A DETAILED READOUT OF THE LAMIDO-MUGABE  
MEETING, BUT SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM  
THE NIGERIAN SIDE WAS THEIR CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE  
AND THE APPEARANCE THAT LAW AND ORDER WAS  
BREAKING DOWN. THE MESSAGE THEY TOOK FROM MUGABE  
WAS THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOW UNDER CONTROL, HE  
REGRETTED THE DEATHS, AND THAT HE WAS SENDING A  
HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION TO THE APRIL 27 TALKS WITH  
GREAT BRITAIN. THE NIGERIANS APPEAR TO VIEW THE  
DIRECT ZIMBABWE-BRITAIN TALKS AS AN IMPORTANT  
OPPORTUNITY TO CALM THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE.

16. (C) IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR MCDONALD'S  
OBSERVATION THAT THE ROOTS OF THE CURRENT  
PROBLEMS LAY IN THE POLITICS OF ZIMBABWE, AND  
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THAT THAT IS WHERE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
MUST HELP ZIMBABWEANS LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS, JUTA  
DEMURRED. HE SAID NIGERIA VIEWED ALL QUESTION OF  
ZIMBABWEAN POLITICS AS AN INTERNAL MATTER, AND  
THAT NIGERIA SOUGHT TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ONLY  
OVER THE LAND ISSUE, ESPECIALLY INSOFAR AS IT  
COMBUSTS INTO VIOLENCE.

COMMENT

17. (C) ZIMBABWE AT THE MOMENT IS A GOOD  
EXAMPLE OF CHURCHILL'S AXIOM THAT JAW-JAW IS  
BETTER THAN WAR-WAR. IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT, IF ANY,  
REAL RESOLUTION TO THE LAND PROBLEM WILL COME  
FROM TALKS BETWEEN THE WAR VETERANS, THE FARMERS,  
AND PRESIDENT MUGABE. HAVING FAILED IN THE

PREVIOUS TWENTY YEARS TO ARRIVE AT A LASTING SOLUTION, IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WILL DO SO NOW. INDEED, POLITICS SEEMS TO PREVAIL FOR NOW. NONETHELESS, TALK IS PREFERABLE TO THE DEATHS, INTIMIDATION, AND POPULATION FLIGHT THAT WE HAVE SEEN IN RECENT DAYS.

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[18.](#) (C) OUR FOCUS MUST BE UPON THE PRACTICAL  
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AND ACHIEVABLE. WE BELIEVE OUR PROPOSED HIGH-  
LEVEL APPROACH TO MUGABE (REFTEL), AIMED AT  
MAKING HIM REALIZE HIS LEADERSHIP OBLIGATIONS AS  
HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, IS CURRENTLY THE BEST MEANS  
FOR US TO ASSIST IN ZIMBABWE. WE ARE DEVELOPING  
TALKING POINTS THAT CAN BE USED FOR THIS  
INITIATIVE. WE AGREE WITH THE THEME OF "HOW CAN  
WE HELP." IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE FARMERS AND  
MUGABE CAN FIND SOME ACCOMMODATION WITH ONE  
ANOTHER, EVEN WHILE REMAINING DIVIDED ON  
FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF HISTORICAL INJUSTICE AND  
THE OBLIGATIONS PAST GENERATIONS CAN IMPOSE ON  
THE PRESENT. AFTER ALL, UNTIL THE RECENT SPATE  
OF LAND OCCUPATIONS THEY APPEARED TO HAVE FOUND A  
WORKABLE PROCESS THROUGH THE RESULTS OF THE LAND  
CONFERENCE OF 1998. SUCH AN ACCOMMODATION,  
HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND ON POLITICAL GOODWILL ON  
BOTH SIDES, SOMETHING THAT MUGABE AT LEAST HAS  
LACKED IN THE RECENT CRISIS.

[19.](#) (C) WE MUST BE ALERT TO THE CHANCE THAT  
MUGABE IS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE LAND ISSUE PER  
SE, BUT SEES IT MERELY AS A TOOL FOR FOMENTING  
DISORDER. SOME OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE THAT  
MUGABE'S REAL AIM IS TO CREATE ENOUGH DISORDER TO  
JUSTIFY IMPOSING A STATE OF EMERGENCY THAT WILL  
ALLOW HIM TO CANCEL THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.  
THIS SCENARIO IS CERTAINLY A REAL POSSIBILITY.  
THAT IS WHY ENGAGEMENT FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF  
OUR GOVERNMENT WITH MUGABE IS CRITICAL AT THIS  
TIME.

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MCDONALD

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